
SGL Newsletter

Society for Germanic Linguistics Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring 2007

SGL News and Reports

SGL Elections

Sarah Fagan has been reelected President of the SGL for a three-year term beginning January 1, 2007 and ending December 31, 2009. The Society expresses its heartfelt thanks to Sarah for her service during her first term of office. Carlee Arnett and Elly van Gelderen were elected to the Executive Committee of the SGL for calendar years 2007, 2008, and 2009. The Society for Germanic Linguistics thanks outgoing Executive Committee members Joseph Salmons and David Fertig for their service during their terms, which concluded in December 2006. At the EC meeting held at GLAC 12, the EC appointed outgoing member David Fertig to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Mark Southern. David will serve in this capacity through December 2007. (*Neil Jacobs*)

SGL Website

The SGL website serves all those looking for information on the activities of the Society, including the Journal of Germanic Linguistics, the Annual Conference (GLAC), membership and dues, and the Newsletter. Recent updates include a revised "Contact" page that points users to e-mail links for all officers and executive committee members, a fully functional and accurate version of the Society's Bylaws, and links to this year's and next year's (!) GLAC websites. Suggestions and questions

concerning the website are very welcome and should be directed to David Fertig (fertig@buffalo.edu). The website can be found at the following addresses: <http://german.lss.wisc.edu/~sgl/> or <http://germaniclinguistics.org> (*David Fertig*)

Journal of Germanic Linguistics

Robert Murray is on sabbatical at present, but reports that *JGL* is on schedule. 19.1 was shipped to CUP in early February, and 19.2 is on track for early May. He will file a full report once he returns.

GLAC Update

Here in Happy Valley we are in the final stages of planning for GLAC 13. This year we received over 50 abstracts on a wide range of topics from scholars around the globe. Currently we are busy putting together the conference program and will post this soon. In addition to our plenary talks by Matthias Schlesewsky and Juliette Blevins, we will also hold a workshop on Pennsylvania German showcasing a variety of materials from our own library and other sources. Please visit our conference website (<http://www.psu.edu/dept/glac/>) for more details on accommodations and traveling to State College. We look forward to seeing everyone in April!

(*Carrie Jackson and Richard Page*)

Conference Report

Conference Report: The Future of Historical Sociolinguistics Bruges, December 2006

Wim Vandebussche, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

On December 2, 2006, the Centre of Linguistics of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and the Historical Sociolinguistics Network organized a colloquium in Bruges (Belgium) on “The Future of Historical Sociolinguistics”. Twenty-five years after Suzanne Romaine’s seminal work ‘Socio-historical linguistics, its status and methodology’ (OUP, 1982), the organizers wanted to bring together the “founding fathers and mothers” of historical sociolinguistics and junior/senior researchers currently involved in the discipline.

The aim of the meeting was to present an overview of the most important developments in the domain over the past 25 years, through plenary talks by 8 leading scholars. The link with present-day research was assured through a special poster session during which a dozen young European researchers presented their work in progress. Klaus J. Mattheier (Universität Heidelberg) provided a general introduction to the colloquium in which theoretical challenges and potential future research topics for the study of social language history were outlined.

In “The future of historical sociolinguistics: Its status and methodology”, Suzanne Romaine (University of Oxford) looked back on lines of evolution in socio-historical linguistics in the past 25 years, stressing the ongoing multidisciplinary nature of the discipline. Using the examples of “grammaticalization” and the spread of the “is like to –V” construction in English, she stressed the ongoing need for statistical analyses and for the development of reliable corpora for historical linguistic research, all the while illustrating that certain periods and genres (e.g., speech-related genres) remain underrepresented in the currently available corpora.

Terttu Nevalainen’s contribution (University of Helsinki) “Historical sociolinguistics as a cross-disciplinary enterprise” complemented these desiderata with actual examples from the so-called “Helsinki corpora”, based on the expertise of the VARIENG-research group. Among other issues, Nevalainen discussed the gender imbalance and the low representation of non-U texts in the available archives. She also referred to sources that may be overlooked by linguists but still contain an enormous amount of highly usable data (e.g., the *Proceedings* of the Old Bailey) to analyze, for example, the influence of an evolving standard language on the text material at hand. She also touched upon the *nomenclature* of the discipline, an issue that would return in later talks throughout the day: whereas historical sociolinguistics /sociohistorical linguistics was an umbrella term back in the early 1980s, the field has seen a diversification involving subfields like historical sociopragmatics, sociodialectology, etc.

Rosita Rindler Schjerve (Universität Wien) focused on the opportunities offered to sociohistorical linguistic analyses by new methodological and theoretical orientations. Drawing, among other things, on the experiences of a large-scale project aimed at “Reconstructing language policy and multilingual practices in the 19th century Habsburg Empire”, she outlined the potential benefits of applying Critical Discourse Analysis to historical text data, especially where historical language contact and language planning is concerned (involving issues of societal multilingualism and interethnic power).

In his plenary talk on “The contribution of historical sociolinguistics to the understanding of the Norwegian language struggle”, Ernst Håkon Jahr (Agder University College, Kristiansand) illustrated the crucial importance of a socially oriented approach to standardization history. Both the conflict between Bokmål and Nynorsk as well as the late medieval contact between Low German and Scandinavian served as case studies in which the integration of present day sociolinguistic methodology into the study of historical variety selection and codification was discussed.

Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade (Universiteit Leiden) addressed the topic of “Historical sociolinguistics and the language of the individual” and launched a plea for historical micro-studies (complementing large-scale corpus research) focusing on the individual language user, using single-author corpora that are made up of original letters and that include draft letters. She also illustrated how social network analyses of these micro-corpora can contribute to a better understanding of the stylistic development of individual letter writers.

Peter Burke (University of Cambridge) gave a panoramic overview of a selection of language-related projects that have been developed by social historians over the past century in his talk on “The social history of language: past, present and future”. Although historical sociolinguistics is fundamentally “a topic located at a cross-roads between disciplines”, many sociolinguists continue to ignore (or be unaware of) research of historians working along similar lines (and vice versa). Burke’s *tour d’horizon* of contributions from diverse languages (including Russian, Portuguese, French, German, Dutch and others) constituted a very strong plea for the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration between all ‘social historians of language’ across academic fields.

Finally, Richard Watts (Universität Bern) connected Weinreich, Herzog and Labov’s (1968) foundations for a theory of language change with “Foucault’s concept of the ‘archive’ in historical sociolinguistics”. Taking various distinct interpretations of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles as an example, he stressed the need for (and the potential risk of) reconstructing socio-communicative practices in retrospect, taking into account the totality of discursive practices at a specific moment in time.

In his closing address, Roland Willemyns (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) rephrased the repeatedly articulated need for international networking in the field of historical sociolinguistics across linguistic and scholarly borders. In this respect he announced that in preliminary meetings leading up to the present conference, a “Standing committee on historical sociolinguistics” has been established (involving all plenary speakers mentioned above and representatives from HiSoN). One of the first actions of this committee is to explore the opportunities and possibilities of a professional membership organization for historical sociolinguistics. In addition to this, the publication of a new printed journal for historical sociolinguistics is being pursued.

The main sponsors of this colloquium were the Research Foundation-Flanders, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and the Town of Bruges. An official reception in the Bruges Town Hall offered by the latter drew this highly successful conference to a close.

Conference Calls

The Society of Historical English Language and Linguistics International Conference

The Society of Historical English Language and Linguistics (SHELL) will hold its biennial conference September 7–9, 2007. All events will take place in the School of Letters of Nagoya University, Higashi-yama Campus, Japan. Abstracts are solicited for any topic in historical English linguistics. Abstract deadline: April 30, 2007. Detailed information can be found at: <http://www.nagoya-u.ac.jp/en/index2.html>. Contact Masachiyo Amano (mamano@lit.nagoya-u.ac.jp) or Tomoyuki Tanaka (tanakat@lit.nagoya-u.ac.jp) for further questions.

Studies in the History of the English Language 5 (SHEL 5)

The 5th Biennial SHEL conference will take place in at the University of Georgia in Athens October 4–6, 2007. Plenary speakers have not yet been announced. Abstracts for 20-minute papers on any topic relevant to the history of the English language are solicited, the deadline being June 1, 2007. Please contact the conference organizer, Bill Kretzschmar, at: <http://www.english.uga.edu/shel5>.

Upcoming Conferences

15th Annual Interdisciplinary German Studies Conference

This conference will take place March 16–March 18, 2007 at UC Berkeley, under the theme “Dialects and Dialogues”. For more information, see the conference website: <http://german.berkeley.edu/germanconf/>.

Workshop on V1 and V2

Taking place in Leiden, the Netherlands, from April 19–April 20, 2007, the aim of this workshop is to bring together researchers on V2 and V1 languages, and to investigate second-placement phenomena in a cross-linguistic perspective. Invited speakers are: David Adger, Dirk Bury, Alain Rouveret, Fred Weerman, Jan-Wouter Zwart, and Olaf Koeneman. Contact Mélanie Joutiteau (melaniejoutiteau@gmail.com) for more information.

8th Conference on Nordic Languages as Second Languages (Nordand 8)

This conference will take place in Helsinki May 10–May 12, 2007. It is organized by the departments of Scandinavian languages and literature and Finnish language and literature at the University of Helsinki. For more information, see the conference website: <http://www.helsinki.fi/hum/skl/nordand2007/english.htm>.

22nd Comparative Germanic Syntax Workshop (CGSW 22)

CGSW 22 will be held at the Universität Stuttgart June 8–June 9, 2007. Invited speakers are Anna Cardinaletti and Gisbert Fanselow. For more information, see the workshop website:

<http://ifla.uni-stuttgart.de/~cgsw/>.

ICHL 2007

The 18th International Conference on Historical Linguistics (ICHL 2007) will be held August 6–11, 2007 at the Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, Canada. The list of plenary speakers is impressive: Lyle Campbell, Richard Kayne, William Labov, Claire Lefebvre, Christiane Marchello-Nizia, Marisa Rivero, Theo Vennemann, and Gillian Sankoff. For more details, consult the conference website: www.ichl2007.uqam.ca.

News and Announcements

International Society for the Linguistics of English (ISLE)

A new society has been formed whose central aim is to promote the study of the structure and history of standard and non-standard varieties of English, in terms of both form and function, at an international level. The hope is that the society will provide a geographically and theoretically neutral central contact point for all those who are academically active and who identify with this aim. A constitution is being drafted and elections for a slate of officers are underway. For more information, see the ISLE website at <http://www.english.ed.ac.uk/isle.html>.

Historical Sociolinguistics Network (HiSoN):

1st Summer School in Historical Sociolinguistics (August 16–23, 2007)

One of the goals of the newly-founded Historical Sociolinguistics Network was to establish a regular summer school for young researchers in the field. The first of these will take place on the island of Lesbos, Greece, in August 2007. Instructors are Peter Trudgill, Stephan Elspaß, Dennis Preston, Ernst Håkon Jahr, Kristine Horner, Kristin Killie, Agnete Nesse, and Eleni Karantzola. Germanic languages constitute a strong focus of the summer school. For more information, go to <http://www.bris.ac.uk/german/hison/summerschool>.

Message from the Editors

We are thankful for everyone's assistance with the Newsletter. We have regularly featured a number of programs in our "Program Profile" section, and we've heard about a variety of relevant conferences in our "Conference Reports" feature. Please consider writing a short piece about your program or about a conference you attended. Additionally, we solicit news and other information that may prove valuable to Germanic linguists including, but not limited to, job postings, conference announcements, and departmental news. Please send your information to Mary O'Brien (mgobrien@ucalgary.ca). The deadline for the next Newsletter is September 1, 2007.

To join the SGL or report a change of address, fill out the form below and send it with a check, money order, or transfer receipt to:

Robert Howell
German Department
818 Van Hise Hall
1220 Linden Drive
University of Wisconsin
MADISON, WI 53706-1558

Name: _____
Address: _____

Email: _____

I would like to become a member of the Society for Germanic Linguistics.
 Please note my address change.

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